

## ABSTRACT

[0204] The present invention describes compositions and methods designed to determine the presence or amount of biologically active natriuretic peptides, or their fragments, in a sample. The degradation of natriuretic peptides is an ongoing process that may be a function of, *inter alia*, the elapsed time between onset of an event triggering natriuretic peptide release into the tissues and the time the sample is obtained or analyzed; the quantity of proteolytic enzymes present; *etc.* This degradation can produce circulating amounts of natriuretic peptides having reduced or lost biological function. The present invention provides, *inter alia*, assays designed to accurately measure biologically active natriuretic peptides, and compositions to inhibit a previously unknown pathway for degradation of natriuretic peptides.